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Psoriasis and the Gluten Connection

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by Dr Vikki Petersen | [Print the article](#) |

25% of Psoriasis Sufferers Benefit from Gluten-Free Diet

Is psoriasis related to gluten? It seems so. One dermatologist, Dr Bagel, who is on the board of the National Psoriasis Foundation, believes that 25% of those suffering with psoriasis could benefit from a gluten-free diet.

At an incidence of approximately 2.2%, psoriasis is the most common autoimmune disease in the United States. Worldwide incidence is 2 to 3%. The disease typically develops between the ages of 15 and 25, but it can develop at any age. Ten to 30% of those suffering develop psoriatic arthritis.

Psoriasis typically presents as raised, inflamed red lesions (called plaques) that are covered in a silvery white scale. These lesions are found on the elbows, scalp, knees and lower back most frequently. The plaques can be itchy, painful or both. In severe cases the skin

around the joints may crack and bleed.

Is it Gluten Sensitivity More Than Celiac Disease?

In 2010, a study performed by Egyptian researchers revealed that 41 patients suffering with psoriasis had significantly higher levels of antibodies to gliadin (showing gluten intolerance) as compared to the control group. Those with psoriasis showed a 34.1% incidence, while the control group was only 2.4%. Less significant were the levels of tTG and EMA (classic blood tests for celiac) – they were increased, but not demonstrably.

It could be, based on these results, that gluten sensitivity is more of a culprit than celiac disease, considering the strong increase of AGA levels and the weaker increase of tTG and EMA. More research will tell the tale, but certainly the association of psoriasis with some form of gluten intolerance seems to be proven in a percentage of those who suffer.

Beer Drinkers are at Twice the Risk

Another interesting study published in 2010 in the Archives of Dermatology followed 82,000 nurses, aged 27 to 44, over 14 years (1991 to 2005) – nice robust study! Performed by Dr. Abrar Qureshi at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, the research revealed that women who drank regular beer (the non-light variety) at least five times per week were twice as likely to develop psoriasis as those who did not drink.

However, those who drank any amount of white wine, red wine, low-alcohol beer or spirits, were not found to be at increased risk. Obviously, alcohol was not the predisposing factor. Lead researcher Dr Qureshi cited that the barley which is used in fermentation of beer was responsible for the increased risk of psoriasis and therefore suspected gluten intolerance.

Patients Respond Well to a Gluten-Free Diet

Here at HealthNOW in our **clinical nutrition** department, we have certainly had our share of success stories with psoriasis and gluten. As we like to point out, the health of the skin is typically reflected in the health of the GI tract. Therefore looking to the health of the gut, food sensitivities and other predisposing factors that create inflammation of the small intestine, is the first place we typically address. Food sensitivities, gluten and dairy being the most common, are frequently discovered, and with good dietary compliance most patients see a nice reversal of their symptoms.

Do you know of anyone suffering with psoriasis? If so, please pass this information along to them. Even if gluten intolerance isn't their problem, something is, and it's likely affecting their small intestine. Appreciating this connection and having the tools to address why imbalance is occurring is the key to our successful treatment of this debilitating condition.

I hope this way informative. If your health is not at the level you desire, consider contacting us for a **free health analysis** – call 408-733-0400. If you don't live locally that isn't a problem. Our **destination clinic** treats patients from across the country and internationally. We are here to help!

To your good health,

Dr Vikki Petersen, DC, CCN

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Gluten Free Doctor of the Year 2013

Co-author of **"The Gluten Effect"**

Author of the eBook: "Gluten Intolerance – What you don't know may be killing you!"

Sources:

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